

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, DR
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS IN DR

1. WITH RELEASE LAST WEEK OF TWO EXTREME LEFTISTS WHO HAD COMPLETED PRISON SENTENCES, GODR RECEIVED FAVORABLE COMMENTS FROM PRESS AND POLITICAL LEADERS FOR RECENT TRENDS IN HANDLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS. RELEASED LEFTISTS ARE FARUK IDELFONSO MIGUEL CASTILLO AND WINSTON VARGAS VALDEZ WHO HAD BEEN CONVICTED OF CRIMES OF VIOLENCE AND HAD SERVED SENTENCES OF FIVE AND THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT RESPECTIVELY. BOTH ARE MILITANT MEMBERS OF THE MOVIMIENTO POPULAR DOMINICANO (MPD), A FAR-LEFT MARXIST POLITICAL GROUPING WITH A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE.

2. UNDER DOMINICAN LAW, ADDITIONAL CHARGES ASSOCIATED WITH PROVEN CRIMES BUT NOT BROUGHT AGAINST DEFENDANTS AT TIME OF ORIGINAL TRIAL CAN BE PRESENTED LATER. GODR HAS OCCASIONALLY USED THIS PREROGATIVE TO RETAIN CUSTODY OF TERRORISTS AND OTHER DANGEROUS PERSONS. ACCORDINGLY ITS WITHDRAWAL OF CHARGES AND RELEASE OF THESE TWO PRISONERS BROUGHT FAVORABLE COMMENTS FROM SEVERAL QUARTERS. UNEXPECTED ONE CAME FROM USUALLY CRITICAL DOMINICAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCD). WHILE DECLARING THAT GOVT. SHOULD TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, PCD SAID COUNTRY HAD RECENTLY MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS ON SAFEGUARDING OF CIVIL LIBERTIES. SECOND SURPRISE STATEMENT CAME FROM ORDINARILY ACERBIC EX-PRESIDENT JUAN BOSCH WHO, WHILE PROPOSING THE RELEASE OF OTHER PRISONERS, ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ON PATH OF PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE COUNTRY.

3. COMMENT: IN SEVERAL RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH AMBASSADOR AND
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EMBOFFS, DOMINICAN LEADERS HAVE BROACHED SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, USUALLY IN CONTEXT OF THEIR SPECULATION ABOUT POLICIES OF A CARTER

ADMINISTRATION, OR HAVE RESPONDED READILY TO INVITATIONS TO DISCUSS IT. THESE CONVERSATIONS HAVE PROBABLY BEEN RELAYED TO OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO ARE INCREASINGLY AWARE OF IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS IN RELATIONS OF U.S. WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. WITHDRAWAL OF ADDITIONAL CHARGES AND PROMPT RELEASE OF CASTILLO AND VARGAS MAY BE RELATED TO SUCH AWARENESS.

HURWITCH

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